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ABSTRACT

In an ethnographic reflection on 10 years experience working in the high schools of inner-city New York, issues of school safety, discipline, and violence are explored. The central proposition is that the mentality that relies on paramilitary security measures and technological devices, such as metal detectors, to achieve safe schools is only an aspect of a long-term arrangement of the schools into a hierarchy and a recent professionalization of the role of the teacher. Educational philosophies today distance adult society more and more from the everyday issues of adolescents in the city. Violence actually becomes more normalized when the technologically oriented security system becomes the primary mechanism for achieving schoolwide discipline. One of the main reasons school violence is not dealt with effectively is that it is not being analyzed adequately. Chapters 1 through 7 explore societal violence, the roles of teachers, security guards, researchers, and educational theorists, and the characteristics of inner-city adolescents. Chapter 8, "Remythologizing Inner-City Schooling," advances some proposals for relieving the crisis of school violence. The most important are the creation of smaller schools and a reconceptualization of the role of the teacher, asserting that teaching is a vocation and not a profession. (Contains 145 references.) (SLD)

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